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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

(Release on receipt)

SUBJECT: "Checking Up On Electric Lamps"--Information from rural electrification specialists, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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With spring housecleaning about over in most quarters...soap, dust mops, scrub brushes, and vacuum cleaners can take a back seat for a while. And homemakers have a chance to look around a bit...to see what else may be done to make their homes more comfortable and attractive.

Home electrification specialists of the Department of Agriculture say that one way is to check your electric lamps...to see whether they are well arranged for service...and for attractiveness.

Be sure, they say, that there is enough light when and where it is needed. Some eyes...and some tasks...need more light than others. A table lamp, for example, should be equipped with a bulb...or bulbs...totalling at least 100 watts. And a floor lamp with reflector...with a minimum of 150 watts.

Try all your lamps...and see whether they are bright enough for tasks you use them for. And be sure that you have a floor, table, or wall lamp wherever anyone usually sits to read, sew, or do any other kind of close eye work.

And be sure your lamp shades are all flared. A flared shade spreads light over a wider area... A drum-shaped shade hugs the light around the base...so that a person has to crouch under the shade to see what he is doing.

Next...take down all lamp shades that have dark-colored linings...because they soak up as much as 50 percent of the light that should be reflected for your use.

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Notice the height of table lamps too...if they are too short...they don't spread light over a very large area... So be sure all your table lamps are tall enough.

Another thing to check on is glare. There's no mistaking it in the bare, unshaded lamp bulb. So steer shy of them...except perhaps in a storage room, clothes closet, or some other place that isn't used much.

Then see that your lamps are arranged so that they avoid shadows. For writing, sewing, drawing, or some other hand task...be sure that the light comes from the left...if you're right-handed...and vice versa if left-handed. Even the shadow of a hand reduces the amount of light reaching the eyes.

Eyes also work overtime if shadows create sharp contrasts of light and dark within a room...because they must keep adjusting themselves to different amounts of light. These shadows are usually caused by lamps which confine light to one spot...and leave the rest of the room in semi-darkness.

Avoid such contrasts by using floor and table lamps that have a glass or plastic reflector under the shade.

When you've finished checking all your lamps...and have them giving you better service...you'll find that there's not only less eye strain around your home...but more beauty. Light properly used brings attractive furnishings and color combinations to life.

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